

CHRIST'S CROWNING GLORY

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*"His glory is great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him."
Psalm 21:5*

I FEEL quite sure that David here sings first concerning himself, and then concerning the far greater King, "great David's greater Son," the Lord Jesus Christ, but I shall apply the text entirely to our blessed Redeemer, and surely, the psalmist's language is most appropriate to Him.

Some of us are going to meet presently, around the table of our Lord, to commemorate His death for us, and of course, there must be some sorrowful reflections connected with that ordinance. How can we remember His death without sorrowing over the sin which made that death necessary? How can we remember "that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and broke it," without feeling that there is a somberness of spirit which becomes us as we surround His table?

Yet we must not indulge the mournful strain too much, for we must never forget that it is a joyous feast, not a funeral repast, to which our Lord invites us, it is a feast which reminds us of His triumph as well as of His conflict and agony.

"After supper," we are told in the record of its institution, "they sang a hymn," and our Lord Jesus Christ would have us come to His table in the spirit of hymn singing, making melody in our hearts unto the Lord. No funeral dirge is appropriate here, no muffled drums nor wailing pipes, but let the daughters of song sound the loud timbre, as Miriam and the women of Israel did at the Red Sea.

Let it not be forgotten too, that the last time this supper will ever be celebrated on earth, it will not die out amid groans and lamentations, but it will cease to be observed any longer because He will have come, whose coming will have been welcomed by the acclamation of all His saints, both those that are alive and remain, and those who come with the King and all His holy angels. This ordinance is full of joy, for each time it closes with a hymn when it is properly celebrated, and at the last, like all external symbols, it shall pass away amidst the hallelujahs of eternity.

Come then, beloved, let us not be in a dolorous mood as we come to the table of our Lord, but let us take all our harps down from the willows, and wake their glad strings to exultant music. He, whom we remember in this ordinance, is not here, for He is risen. He is not there, on yonder crucifix. His wounds bleed no longer, no thorns surround His brow, no nails pierce His feet and hands, no spear tears open His side, for He has gone back into the glory which was His ere the worlds were made, and it is thus that we are now to think of Him, "His glory is great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him."

In meditating upon this text, we shall notice first, that *it reminds us of a divine salvation*, secondly, *it sets forth the glory of Jesus in that salvation*, and thirdly, *it reveals to us the reward which Jesus has obtained for that salvation*, "Honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him."

I. First then, THE TEXT REMINDS US OF A DIVINE SALVATION.

It speaks of "Thy salvation," that is to say, the salvation of God, by which is intended, according to the Hebrew idiom, not merely the grandest of all salvations, the chief of all deliverances, but actually, that the salvation of which we speak is God's. O brethren, though the truth be very simple, and the observations I shall make upon it may be very trite, yet is it a truth never to be put in the background that "salvation is of the Lord"!

Remember that *the salvation of man is God's, in the conception of it*. He first conceived the idea of redeeming the rebellious sons of Adam. It must be so, for the sons of Adam were not born when the Lord first planned the way of their salvation. From old eternity, ere yet the sun had opened his eye of fire, God in far-reaching foresight had beheld the sons of Adam ruined by the fall, and He resolved that, out of them He would choose a people who should be redeemed, and who, to all eternity, should show forth His praise.

From the august mind of the infinite God, the first thought of salvation sprang, and it was He who sketched and mapped it all out, electing unto eternal life as many as it pleased Him, settling the way by which they would be redeemed, the method by which they would be called, arranging the place, the day, the hour, the means, by which they would be converted, fixing it all according to His eternal purpose, in infinite wisdom and prudence, for in every part it was to be of Him, and through Him, and to Him.

Even as in the old tabernacle in the wilderness, every board, and curtain, and hook, and silver socket, every badger skin, and every vessel of the sanctuary, was ordained by God, and man was only left to carry out God's plan, even so is it in the salvation of God. In its minutest details, as well as in its grand outline, the provisions of eternal love are of the Lord, so it is in His salvation.

But you know, dear brethren, that it was not only His in the arranging, but *it was also carried out by God*. Who is He that has redeemed us by His blood, but He who is over all God, blessed forever? Who trod the winepress side by side with Him? Did He not stand there alone, and singlehanded, win the victory? And whence comes every blessing of salvation? Who provided it? Has man any share in the provision of any of the mercies by which sinners are taken out of sin into righteousness, and raised from the ruins of the fall to all the glories of heaven? No, from first to last, all the provisions of eternal love are of the Lord, so it is in His salvation.

Nay, more than that, God has not only planned and provided everything relating to it, but *it is He who applies the salvation which He has thus provided*. No one believes that Jesus is the Christ but by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me," says Christ. Much is said by some people about free will, but free will has never done anything in this world yet—unless moved by free grace—except to ruin mankind. Leave men to themselves, and they are sure to choose that which is evil.

As naturally as the river runs downwards to the sea, so does the heart of man turn towards that which is unclean. If the heart ever ascends towards holiness, and Christ, and God, it is because it is drawn upward by grace, and the Lord is working in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure. From the first sigh of repentance to the last hymn of thanksgiving, everything in us that is good is His workmanship, and so, in that respect, our salvation is of the Lord.

And beloved, when it is all finished—when every one, who ever shall be called, has been called—when every one of the Lord's elect has been regenerated, justified, sanctified, and glorified—when the whole of the blood-washed family of God shall surround His throne above, all the glory shall be given unto the Lord alone. There will be no jarring note in heaven, no whisper of human merit, no claim of a reward for good intentions, but every crown shall be cast at Jesus' feet, and every voice shall join in the ascription, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be all the glory of the salvation which thou hast wrought out for us from first to last."

Let me pause, just a minute, to put this question to each one here—Do you, dear friend, know anything about this salvation which is all of God? I fear that there are many who have no more religion than they have made themselves. Their religion is the result of their own efforts to improve themselves. Ah, sirs! our Savior's words are still true, "Ye must be born again," and as it was in our first birth, so must it be in our second birth—not our own act. Depend upon it, if all the good you have has been fetched out of yourself as the spider draws its web out of its own bowels, it will all have to be brushed away. All that nature spins will have to be unraveled, and all that nature builds will have to be pulled down. God must save you, or you will be lost forever.

The Holy Spirit, the third Person of the blessed Trinity in Unity, must come upon you, and quicken you into newness of life, and renew you in the spirit of your mind, or else you will fall short of that which is requisite for admission into the kingdom of God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." The best flesh is only flesh, and only "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Consequently, the Spirit of God must operate upon us, or else we shall remain unspiritual, not able to understand spiritual things, and not possessing that spiritual life without which we cannot enter, at the last, into the enjoyment of those spiritual pleasures which are at God's right hand forevermore.

One thing I can say without any doubt. I, personally, know that it is God's salvation that has saved me, and I think I speak the mind of many here when I say that they feel that if the Holy Spirit does not work in them from the first to the last, their salvation will never be accomplished. I do not know any doctrine which my experience more fully confirms than that to which Jonah gave utterance when he was in the whale's belly, "Salvation is of the LORD." It is, as our text reminds us, a divine salvation.

II. Now secondly, I come to the subject which I desire to impress most deeply upon your memory, that is, THE GLORY OF CHRIST IN THE SALVATION OF GOD, "His glory is great in thy salvation."

Ah, brethren! the tongues of men and angels can never fully tell the glory of Christ in salvation. It is a subject to be thought over by the loftiest intellects, a theme for men who lie awake at nights, to meditate upon, a topic worthy of the thoughts of those who linger on the verge of heaven.

Dr. John Owen's pen was somewhat heavy in its style, but it never glowed and burned so much as when he wrote upon the glory of Christ. This is a theme which the glorified spirits before the throne perpetually contemplate, and the more fit we are to be among them, the more delightful will this subject be to us. As to that glory, oh, if I had the allotting and the measuring of it, what glory I would give to my dear Lord and Master!

I read the other day—I cannot exactly quote the words, though I give the sense—a sentence by Samuel Rutherford, in which he said that he would like to pile up ten thousand million heavens upon the top of the third heaven to which Paul was caught up, and put Christ in that high place, and then He would not be as high as He deserved to be put, and truly, no honors seem sufficient for Him who stripped Himself of all He had that He might become the Savior of sinners.

And first, it is His glory that *He has redeemed His people from stupendous evils*. When a statesman or a warrior rescues a country from a cruel despotism, and brings to it the blessings of liberty, he deserves great praise. But my brethren, the tyranny of sin, from which Christ has delivered His people, was a thousand times worse than the rule of the worst human despot. Consider for a moment, the position in which His people were in the sight of God. They had sinned, and they had therefore become exposed to the wrath of God. Unless some power, greater than their own should intervene, they must be cast into hell forever. God Himself could not lay aside His justice, for God would cease to be if He ceased to be just, and an unjust God is a contradiction in terms—an impossible combination.

How then were these, who had sinned against God, to be delivered from the peril which hung over them? Moreover, they were held in bondage by sin, so that, even if the punishment of their past sin could be removed, they were still members of an enslaved race. Satan had cast his iron chains about them, and they were led captive by him at his will.

Ah, sirs! it is from this bondage that Christ has set us free, for He has taken away our guilt, bearing it in His own body up to the tree, and then hurling it away from the tree into His grave, to be remembered against us no more forever. By bearing the punishment that was due to us, Christ has delivered us from the yoke of Satan and of sin, and by the wondrous redemption which He has wrought out and brought in, He has made His people "free indeed." No curse now hangs above their head, no sin now has dominion over them, for they are not under the law, but under grace. Therefore, sound aloud your Deliverer's praises, all you who have been thus delivered!

Think of what stupendous evils these were from which Christ set us free. To overthrow an oppressive empire, is a great achievement. To rout the vast hordes that are led into the battlefield by

great tyrants is no slight victory. The conqueror's statue is set up on high, and his name is emblazoned upon the scroll of earthly fame, then, what honor shall be given to Christ, who has set us free from mightier foes than ever trampled upon a nation's liberties?

Recollect too, that He has not only delivered us from stupendous evils, but *in the process, He has crushed the mightiest powers*. It did seem at one time, as if evil would get the mastery in God's universe. God had permitted the strange experiment, as it seemed, of making creatures, gifted with free agency, with whose free agency He would not interfere.

These creatures broke His law. How was the evil to be prevented from spreading? They would multiply and increase, as indeed they have done, and multiplying and increasing, there would be so many millions of spirits in the universe, all rebellious against God, and consequently, all suffering. There would be countless myriads, born into God's world, all bearing hearts of sin within their bosoms, and all, therefore, subject to the wrath of God. How Satan exulted at the prospect of evil increasing!

But when Jesus came into this world, He put His foot upon the head of the old dragon, and so effectually crushed him to the earth so that he has never been able to rise again. Satan saw Christ hanging upon the cross, and thought that was his opportunity for gaining a decisive victory, yet it proved to be the hour of his greatest defeat.

Death drove his sting right through the heart of Christ, but it so fixed itself in His cross that it could never be drawn out again, and now that sting of death, which is sin, is gone so far as all believers in Christ are concerned. He has vanquished all the powers of evil—sin, death, and hell—and shattered their forces forever. Listen to this great shout of victory, oh, that I had a voice loud enough to make it ring round the globe, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

Perhaps the main point of Christ's glory in the salvation of His people is that *He has achieved this by means which reflect unbounded honor upon His holy name*. I have often read the story of Cromwell's Ironsides, and sympathizing deeply with them in the objective of their fight, I have greatly admired their stern courage and consecrated ardor, but still, I cannot think of battles and of fighting for the best of objectives without something of a shudder, so I cannot approve of the means which they employed.

Doubtless, our country owes her present liberties to those brave men, yet for all that, I grieve over the awful price of blood at which those liberties were purchased. Our blessed Lord and Master conquered all our foes, but what were the weapons He used to secure so glorious a victory? Do you look up to Him and inquire, "Where is Your battle-axe, O Lord Jesus? Where are Your spear, Your sword, Your quiver, and Your arrows?" He bids you look at His hands, His feet, His side, His heart. These are the weapons with which He overcame all the powers of darkness.

There was much suffering in that awful conflict, but the suffering was all His own. There was a terrible gory sweat, but it came from His own body. There were wounds, and there was death, but the wounds were in His precious body, the death was all His own. This is how evil was conquered—by love which denied itself, even to the death, for the sake of others. This is how human stubbornness was vanquished—by an almighty patience that could suffer at the hands of rebellious sinners till it bled to death.

This is your death, O death—this is your hell, O hell—this is your destruction, O destruction—that God Himself bore the consequences of His creatures' sin! Nay, start not back at that expression I pray you, do not think of Christ as being separated from God. God did not find somebody else to be the Substitute for sinners, but He gave His only begotten and well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ, who is the equal and in all respects one with the Father. It was God Himself, in the person of the man Christ Jesus, who bore the penalty that was due to human sin, it was God, in the person of His Son, suffering, agonizing, groaning, dying, to put our sin away forever.

I cannot conceive, nor do I think that cherubim and seraphim could conceive of anything more noble and more glorious than this self-sacrifice of the Son of God. He conquers, not by making others suffer, but by sufferings all His own.

A kindred thought to that is this. Christ's glory is great in the divine salvation, because *it developed and revealed the most wonderful attributes*. Suppose England, were to win a great victory at sea. We should probably ascribe it to her superior men-of-war. Generally battles are decided, as Napoleon said, by the big battalions, or by the excellence of the weapons that are used by the soldiers. If one man has an old Brown Bess, and another a modern rifle, we can pretty well guess on which side the victory will be. We call it "glory" when one fellow, who is twice as big as another, knocks the little one down, at least, we call it "glory" when the nation, which has the better ships, and the bigger army, wins the victory.

I saw a huge Newfoundland dog pick up a poodle and shake him, there was about as much "glory" in that as when great nations war against little ones, and overpower them. It is the same kind of "glory" as being a bigger bully, and having a harder fist and stronger muscles than anybody else. That may be the sort of glory for a bull, or a lion, or an ass, but it is not the glory that is suited to men, and especially to Christian men.

But when Christ came and redeemed us, there was, on His part, no display of physical power, mere brute power. There was a display of power, but it was the power of goodness, the power to suffer, the power to be patient, the power to love, as if God said to men, "Sinners and rebels as you are, I love you more than you hate Me, and great as your badness is, My goodness shall overwhelm your badness, My pardoning mercy shall overpower your power to transgress."

As the result of His death upon the cross, our Lord Jesus has saved a multitude whom no man can number, and a part of His glory consists in *the fact that there are so many whom He has saved*. The salvation of God is not for just a little privileged company. I know that certain "sound" brethren imagine that the blessings of salvation are confined to just a few favored individuals in Little Zoar, or Rehoboth, they delight in the idea that there are only a few that will be saved.

I trust that we have no sympathy with such narrow views, for my own part, I rejoice to know that in heaven, there will be "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," who shall cry, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." So our Lord Jesus Christ has great glory from the fact that He saves so many sinners.

There is this peculiarity about all which He saves, that *they are attached to Him forever*. His glory is great in their salvation because every one of them is, from that day forth, Christ's man, Christ's woman, forever and for evermore.

In travelling through France lately, I have been greatly amused at seeing in various public squares, pedestals that were evidently intended for equestrian statues, but there are no statues upon them, and there are escutcheons upon town halls, which look as if there should have been medallions upon them, but there are no portraits where the medallions should have been. On making inquiries, you will find that a statue of Napoleon the Third used to stand on that pedestal, and a medallion of him used to be on that town hall. That must be a fine country for stone-masons, because they so frequently have fresh governments, and need also to have fresh statues.

I have heard of a man living in Paris, who used to ask every morning, whether he was under a republic, or a monarchy, or an empire, and when he was told which it was, he was not at all sure that it would last till the evening. No matter how good the ruler has been, nor how many times they have painted his likeness, or set up his image, the moment he has ill fortune, away go all the representations of him.

You would have thought that many rulers would have obtained a permanent place in the hearts of their people, yet we know from the history of various countries, that very few have done so. Those who are idolized today are despised tomorrow. But our Lord Jesus has a glory which is great in our salvation, because His image is forever enshrined in our hearts.

The great Napoleon hit the nail on the head when, at St. Helena, musing upon his own position, he said to one who walked with him, "Jesus Christ is the most wonderful of men. I founded an empire, which has passed away, but His never will, and I see the reason for that. Mine was founded upon force, but Christ's is founded upon love." Ah, that is the reason for our devotion to Him! He has loved us so

much that He has won us to Himself forever. These hands of mine are manacled with blessed, invisible, but unbreakable bands of love, never was I truly free until I felt those fetters binding me to my Lord. This heart of mine is fast riveted to Christ. It never was really my own till it became His, but now it is His forever and ever. "I bear in my body," said Paul, "the marks of the Lord Jesus." He felt it to be an unspeakable honor to be the branded slave of Jesus Christ, with the cross burnt into his very flesh by the suffering which he had endured for the sake of his dear Lord and Master.

Truly, brethren, to rule over other men is a great thing, to have moral power over men is no mean matter, but to get men so to love you that they would willingly die for you—to get them so to love you that they would sooner cease to live than cease to love you—this is to occupy a glorious high throne, and such is the throne upon which Christ sits in the hearts of all His people, such is the dominion which He wields over all the hosts that He has purchased with His precious blood. Well saith the prophet in our text—for the psalmist was a true prophet—"His glory is great in thy salvation."

III. Now thirdly, our text REVEALS THE REWARD WHICH JESUS HAS OBTAINED FOR THIS GREAT SALVATION, "Honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him." I do not intend to preach upon this last point, but only to give you a few sentences by way of an outline of the honor and majesty which God the Father has laid upon Christ.

First, *our Lord Jesus Christ has been exalted, as man, to reign over the angels.* As God, He was ever Ruler, Governor, and Lord of all, but the man Christ Jesus died, was buried, and rose again, and then ascended into glory, and now He is Head over all principalities and powers, and all the holy angels that have never fallen delight to do His bidding.

My brother, in that very sweet prayer before the sermon, to which I assented with all my heart, pleaded that we might get a view of Jesus Christ within the veil in His glory. That is how I want you to think of Him—that very man, who hung upon the tree; that very man, who was the butt of all the reproaches and scorn of His enemies, now sits upon the throne of God, and around Him all the cherubim and seraphim are gathered, all worshipping and adoring Him, and praising and magnifying His holy name.

Then, my brethren, *God has given to the Lord Jesus to be the Head of His Church.* Over all the redeemed on earth and in heaven, Christ presides and rules. While He is the Lord of the angels, He is also the Lord of all elect men. His Father gave them to Him from eternity, and made Him to be the Head and made them to be the members of His mystical body. Christ is the one and only Head and supreme Ruler of His Church.

It is true that there are men who set themselves up as governors of Christ's church, and there is an antichrist at Rome, who calls himself the head of the church, but that is only a wicked fiction, a manifest lie. There is but one Head of the church, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only supreme Ruler, and before Him all His loyal subjects bow. "Honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him."

Being Head of His church, *He is also Head over all things outside of His church, in which His church is concerned.* Joseph ruled Egypt for the good of Israel, and in like manner does Christ rule the whole world for the good of His people. All the arrangements of providence are under His control, nothing is done in the entire universe without His command or His permission.

Does that statement startle you? It is, nevertheless, true. He, who was made Lord of the angels, has had all things put under His feet, and He is at this moment, Lord of all, and brethren, we shall see this demonstrated soon, for He is coming. As surely as He went up to heaven, literally and personally, so surely will He come again, literally and personally, and when He does come, it will be as Ruler and Lord over all, for He will come to judge the quick and the dead according to His gospel.

Then will all created intelligences behold the honor and majesty which God has put upon Him. There will have to appear before the judgment seat of the Nazarene, the spirits that fell ages upon ages ago. Satan shall come, and receive his final sentence, and be banished forever to hell. Then shall come the unbelieving world, to hear from Christ's lips the terrible message, "Depart, ye cursed!"

The earth shall reel beneath His presence—that earth which could scarcely lend Him a sepulcher, and heaven and earth shall flee away from that face which earth once seemed to scorn and heaven to forget. Ah, it will be seen who the Christ is in that day! A trumpet blast, more terrible than that which startled the echoes of Sinai, shall ring over land and sea. A cloud shall come, and on it shall stand the great white throne, and upon it shall be seated the “man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” But oh, how changed!

“With rainbow wreath and robes of storm,”—

He shall come—with a face shining above the brightness of the sun, and with eyes like flames of fire, He shall come in all the glory of His Father, with all His holy angels to attend Him, and to swell the triumph of His appearing. O brothers and sisters, let us anticipate that glorious appearing, and begin to clap our hands with exultation over our Lord's triumphal advent!

But are we all His people? Do not desire that day if you are not His, for the day of the Lord will be darkness, and not light, to all who are His enemies. The more glorious Christ is to His own people, the more dreadful will His appearance be to you if you live as unbelievers, and if you die without trusting in Him. O Christians, I bid you be glad in your Lord, and I also bid you pray for the unsaved, that they may trust, and love, and serve Jesus too, and rejoice with you in recollecting that He is coming again to receive unto Himself all to whom He is both Lord and Savior! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

LUKE 7:18-50

Verse 18. *And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things.*

John was in prison, and possibly, troubled in spirit.

19. *And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?*

Did John doubt, then? Perhaps not. It may be that he saw that his disciples doubted, and that he wished their fears to be removed. It is possible however, that he did himself have doubts. It is no unusual thing for the bravest hearts to be subject to fits of doubt. Elijah, you remember, sat under a juniper tree in the wilderness, “and he requested for himself that he might die,” though he was the man who never was to die. And John—the Elijah of the Christian dispensation, though a man of iron, was but a man, so he sent two of his disciples to Jesus, saying, “Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?”

20-22. *When the men were come unto him, they said, John the Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard;*

Our old proverb says that actions speak louder than words, so an answer in His actions would be more eloquent with these inquirers than even an answer in our Lord's own words. He bade them look at the evidences of His Messiahship which He gave them by His miraculous cures, and then He said to them, “Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard.” It would be well if our lives were such that if any inquired what we were, we should only have to say that they might judge us by what they had seen and heard in our common everyday life and conversation.

22-23. *How that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.*

According to our Lord's testimony, the preaching of the gospel to the poor is as great a proof of His Messiahship as the raising of the dead. Then how highly it ought to be prized by them, and how glad should they be who have the gospel now preached freely in their hearing!

24. And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

The wind on the banks of the Jordan where there are plenty of reeds growing—did you see a man who would bow before every breath of popular favor or popular wrath? Was John the Baptist such a man as that? No, certainly not.

25. But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously appareled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

They do not preach repentance. As is their clothing, so is their doctrine. They try to show a royal road to heaven—a smooth and easy path. But was John the Baptist a preacher of that kind? No, that he was not.

26-28. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

Passing into the dispensation of clearer light, he who is least among the believers of the Gospel of Jesus is, in some respects, greater than this man, who could only preach repentance, and point to a coming Savior.

29-32. And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace,—

At play, the playing of children is often according to the manners and customs of grown up people.

32. And calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced;

“You would not play a merry game when we asked you to do so.”

32. We have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

“You would not play either at funerals or weddings.”

33. For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.

“He came among you as an ascetic, denying himself, not only the luxuries of life, but even the common comforts that others enjoyed, and you say, ‘He hath a devil.’”

34. The Son of man is come eating and drinking;

“He does not pretend to be an ascetic, He comes, on the contrary, to show that neither meat nor drink can save a man. What do you say, then, of this Son of man?”

34-35. And ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! But wisdom is justified of all her children.

Though the world contemns all wisdom's children, whichever way they go, and is not pleased with their manners, whatever manners they possess, yet in the long run, when the wisdom of God shall be all unfolded, it will be seen that the roughness of John and the gentleness and lovingkindness of Jesus were both right in their proper place. If fish are not caught in the Gospel fishery, it may sometimes be the fisherman's fault, but more often, it is the fault of the fish themselves. Here we have two very different kinds of fishermen, yet neither of them attracts all, though each of them draws some.

36-37. And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And, behold,—

For it is a wonder of grace, “Behold,”—

37. A woman in the city, which was a sinner,—

A sinner by profession, a public and notorious sinner—

37-44. When she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the

Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spoke within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor who had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet:

“Though it was only a common act of courtesy, such as should always be shown to a guest, you did neglect that;”—

44. *But she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head.*

“She has given My feet no common washing, for she has washed them with her tears. You would only have brought Me a linen napkin, but she has ‘wiped them with the hairs of her head.’”

45. *Thou gavest me no kiss:*

Which was usually given as a greeting to guests at that time. Simon had not given to Jesus the honor which was due to Him, which would have been to kiss His forehead.

45. *But this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.*

Every word is emphatic to show how far she had gone beyond Simon, who thought himself so much better than she was.

46. *My head with oil thou didst not anoint:*

Another usual Eastern custom with guests whom the host intended to honor.

46. *But this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.*

Anointed them, not with ordinary olive oil, but with precious costly ointment.

47. *Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much:*

“You know that her sins were many, and I tell you that they have been forgiven, and you can see, by her actions, that she loves much.”

47-48. *But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.*

What music that sentence “Thy sins are forgiven,” must have been to her! “Ah!” says one, “I also should like to hear that sentence. Beyond everything else in the whole world would I desire to hear Jesus say to me, ‘Thy sins are forgiven.’” Then put yourself in the place that this woman occupied. When Joab clung to the horns of the altar, he had to die there, but this woman had fled to the feet of Jesus, and she did not die there, nor shall you, but at those blessed feet, weeping for sin, and trusting the great Sin-bearer, you shall receive assurance of pardon, “Thy sins are forgiven.”

49-50. *And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And He said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.*

He did not want this young convert, this beginner in the Christian life, to hear the bickering and controversies of these coarse spirits, so He said to her, “Go in peace,” and dear soul, if you have begun to find out that even in the Christian church, there are many opinions concerning many things, do not trouble yourself about those things. This is enough for you, “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”

There may be some who are called to contend for this or that point of the faith, but as for you, poor child, if, with your broken heart, you have found the Savior, and if you love Him with an inward, warm, and hearty love, do not spoil that love by getting into a controversial spirit, “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.